

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

**1-3. (Canceled)**

**4. (Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticles have an average particle diameter of 0.01[[.]]  $\mu\text{m}$  to 150  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**5. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

**6. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

**7. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

9-10. (Canceled)

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by reaction between hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

12-19. (Canceled)

20. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The microparticle according to claim ~~1~~231, wherein the ~~crosslinkage~~crosslinkable functional group is a mercapto group, and the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by disulfide formation.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The microparticle according to claim ~~1~~231, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are

formed by reaction between a hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

26. (Currently Amended) the method according to claim 25, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the ~~dug~~ drug is held in the microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

28-30. (Canceled)

**31. (Currently Amended)** A method for preparing crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles, which ~~comprise~~ comprises the following steps:

a) preparing a dilute solution containing (1) a polysaccharide derivative having at least one ~~crosslinkage~~ crosslinkable functional group in a range of 0.1 to 5% (w/v) and (2) a crosslinking agent;

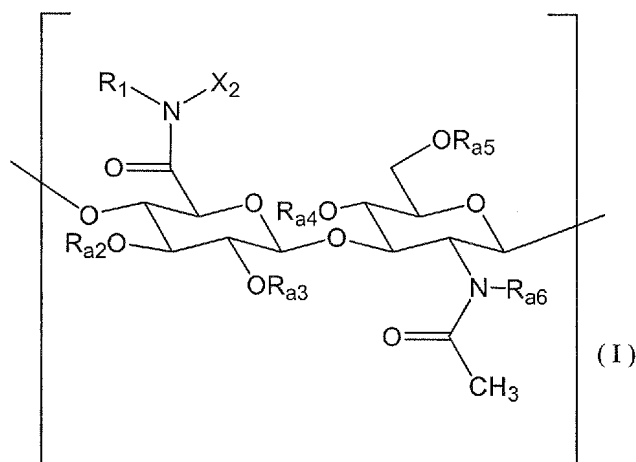
b) dispersing the solution by spraying to form microparticulate droplets; and

c) concentrating the solution contained in the droplets to facilitate a crosslinking addition reaction of the polysaccharide derivative between a mercapto group and a an unsaturated C-C bond;

wherein steps b) and c) are carried out in a spray drying procedure;

wherein the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represented by Formula (I);

~~{Formula-I}~~



wherein  $X_2$  represents  $\text{---Y}_1\text{---Q}_1\text{---N(---R}_2\text{)---Y}_3\text{---Q}_2\text{---SH}$ ,  $\text{---Y}_1\text{---Q}_1\text{---Y}_2\text{---N(---R}_2\text{)---Y}_3\text{---Q}_2\text{---SH}$ ,  $\text{---N(---R}_2\text{)---Y}_3\text{---Q}_2\text{---SH}$ ,  $\text{---NHCO---(CH}_2\text{)}_4\text{---CONH---NH---C(=NH)---(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{---SH}$ ,  $\text{---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---NH---C(---NH)---(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{---SH}$ ,  $\text{---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---NH---C(=NH)---(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{---SH}$ , or  $\text{---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---O---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---O---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---NH---C(=NH)---(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{---SH}$ ,

$R_1$  represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_{a2}$ ,  $R_{a3}$ ,  $R_{a4}$ ,  $R_{a5}$  and  $R_{a6}$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkenyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkynyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-16}$  alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-16}$  alkynylcarbonyl group or  $\text{---SO}_2\text{OH}$ ,

$Y_1$  represents a single bond,  $-N(-R_3)CO-$ ,  $-N(-R_3)-$ ,  $-CO-$  or  $-CH_2CO-$ ,

$Y_2$  represents a single bond,  $-CON(-R_4)-$  or  $-N(-R_4)-$ ,

$Q_1$  represents a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkylene group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a ~~linear~~linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

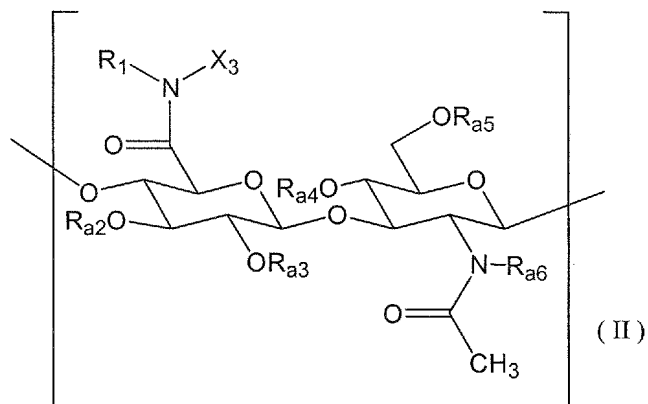
$Y_3$  represents a single bond,  $-CO-$ ,  $-CO_2-$ ,  $-CH_2-CH(OH)-$  or  $-CONH-$ , and

$Q_2$  represents a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkylene group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more unsaturated C-C bond-containing groups; or

the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represent by Formula (II):

~~[Formula 2]~~



wherein  $X_3$  represents  $-Y_1-Q_1-Y_2-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4$  or  $-n(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4$ ,

$R_1$  represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_{a2}$ ,  $R_{a3}$ ,  $R_{a4}$ ,  $R_{a5}$  and  $R_{a6}$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$ -alkenyl,  $C_{2-6}$  alkenyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$ -alkynyl,  $C_{2-6}$  alkynyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$ -alkylcarbonyl,  $C_{1-6}$  alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$ -alkenylcarbonyl,  $C_{2-6}$  alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$ -alkynylcarbonyl,  $C_{2-6}$  alkynylcarbonyl group or  $-SO_2OH$ ,

$Y_1$  represents a single bond,  $-N(-R_3)CO-$ ,  $-N(-R_3)-$ ,  $-CO-$  or  $-CH_2CO-$ ,

$Y_2$  represents a single bond,  $-CON(-R_4)-$  or  $-N(-R_4)-$ ,

$Y_3$  represents a single bond,  $-CO-$  or  $-CH_2CO-$ ,

$Q_1$  represents a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkylene group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a ~~linear~~ linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$Q_4$  represents a linear or branched  $C_{2-10}$  alkenyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{2-10}$  alkynyl group, and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more mercapto groups.

**32. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 5, wherein the crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles are injectable.

**33. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 5, wherein the drug is a protein.

**34. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 24 hours or more.



**35. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 5 days or more.

**36. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the drug is released upon enzymatic digestion.